Acquiring of vessels by Shipping Industry

*238. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Shipping Industry which was short of vessels to cope up with the increasing demand for transport of goods is planning to run the shipping services by acquiring more vessels and revamping the administration; and

(b) if so, when Government propose to take such measures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Acquisition of vessels to augment the Indian shipping fleet, which is at present inadequate, and the revamping of administration involving measures for speedier acquisition, is a continuous process. Government have already taken several measures to assist the shipping industry to augment tonnage. These are given below:—

(1) A streamlined procedure has been evolved for speedy acquisition of ships by private shipping companies through the Ship Acquisition Licensing Committee (SALC).

(2) Permitted companies to acquire ships for replacement in excess of 25 per cent of tonnage to be replaced. Such proposals need not be placed before Ship Acquisition Licensing Commitee.

(3) The procedure for certifying the reasonableness of price/granting technical clearance of ship acquisition has been simplified.

(4) With a view to help companies under rehabilitation to acquire additional tonnage, these companies were allowed to finance 60 per cent of the vessel price out of free foreign exchange against the norm of 40 per cent.

(5) The Government is continuously reviewing the scope for further liberalisation in the areas of sale and purchase of ships, scrapping of ships, etc.

(6) Fiscal concessions were extended to the shipping industry to help it to raise the necessary capital for financing ship acquisition in the 90s. These were passed by Parliament in the Direct Tax Laws (Second Amendment) Act, 1989.

Deaths in Tihar Jail

*239. DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that at least ten deaths have occurred in Tihar Jail during the last one-and-a-half month;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps Government have taken to rectify the same?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. B. CHAVAN): (a) to (c) In the last one and a half month from 15th July, 1991 to 31st August, 1991, 5 prisoners died. The jail authorities have intimated that of the five, two committed suicide in the jail, two were drug addicts and died of natural causes and one, who was suffering from bronchial asthma, died in jail hospital. The Delhi Administration has taken certain measures to augment medical services in the Tihar Jail.